



APTOS  
WATSONVILLE

Office of the President  
6500 Soquel Drive  
Aptos, CA 95003  
O: 831.479.6100  
F: 831.479.6100  
[www.cabrillo.edu](http://www.cabrillo.edu)

June 14, 2018

The Honorable Connie Leyva  
Chair, Senate Education Committee  
California State Capitol Room 2083  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Hannah-Beth Jackson  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
California State Capitol Room 2187  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 302 (Berman) Parking: Homeless Students**  
**Position: Opposed**

Dear Senator Leyva and Senator Jackson,

On behalf of Cabrillo Community College District, I write to respectfully inform you of our opposition to **AB 302 (Berman)**, well-intentioned legislation that will mandate California's community colleges to open campus parking lots for homeless student sleeping quarters. While we agree with the author that, like many Californians, homelessness is affecting many of our students, we are concerned that this well-meaning approach masks the deeper issue of lack of resources, such as financial aid for California's community college students, and instead potentially subjects students to sanitation and safety issues.

We agree with Assemblymember Berman that homeless students deserve a safe, clean and decent place to sleep in at night. However, AB 302 does nothing to solve the basic needs challenges of our students nor does it provide for their safety. **Instead, we are concerned AB 302 perpetuates the structural inequities in California's higher education system.** California Community Colleges serve the greatest proportion of low-income and students of color. Our students comprise 74% of the state's public higher education system. Yet, our institutions receive the lowest per-student funding in California. Sadly, less than 10% of our 2.2 million students receive Cal Grants. AB 302 does not address the longstanding oppression against our system. Rather, by only including community colleges and not UC and CSU, AB 302 sends the message that parking lots are good enough for community college students. To further reinforce this message, the Governor's Budget 2019-20 includes rapid rehousing funds for UC and CSU students yet excluded the community college students. We urge you to eliminate bias from education and explore safer and more humane options, such as rapid rehousing.

By requiring all community colleges, regardless of geographic location, to establish quasi-living facilities for students living in their car, AB 302 creates an extraneous liability for California Community Colleges. The mandate to use parking lots as living establishments for homeless students does not take into account local responsibility to adequately address the sanitation and public safety needs of our homeless students, the general student population, and college faculty and staff. College parking lots vary widely in size, scope, and type. While some parking lots at a college may have the appropriate facilities to accommodate the sanitation and safety needs, other parking lots can be located far away from bathroom facilities or access to public safety officers. Ultimately, this services is best implemented as a permissive statute that enables a college and its surrounding community to collaborate in a manner that can afford our students decent housing opportunities.

Cabrillo Community College District is in agreement with the author regarding the affordability issues impacting our students. Unfortunately, AB 302 does not address the longstanding neglect of the financial aid needs of students who attend a California Community College. A recent report by The HOPE Lab found that 50% of our students were food insecure, 60% of our students experienced housing insecurity, and 19% of our students have been homeless in the past year. These affordability challenges have a very real impact on our student's ability to take more classes, focus on their education, and be academically successful. This is exacerbated by the lack of state financial aid resources that are available to our students. Due to tight eligibility rules, low levels of financial aid grants for items such as food, transportation and housing, and an incredibly competitive Cal Grant award process, our low-income students are not receiving the support they need to be



APTOS  
WATSONVILLE

Office of the President  
6500 Soquel Drive  
Aptos, CA 95003  
O: 831.479.6100  
F: 831.479.6100  
[www.cabrillo.edu](http://www.cabrillo.edu)

academically successful or meet their basic needs. The barriers to financial aid for community college students play a major role in perpetuating their basic needs insecurity. AB 302 makes no attempt to solve this very real and longstanding issue.

As the lowest funded system of education in California, community colleges do not have the resources available to cover the expenses of converting campus parking lots into quasi-living quarters with adequate safety, surveillance, and sanitation. **In order to meet the requirements currently proposed in AB 302, which include appropriate safety monitoring precautions so that college can still meet Cleary and Title IX requirements, sanitation, restrooms, liability insurance, student verification, among other costs, the annual ongoing statewide costs for the bills are estimated at \$68,879,328.** AB 302 utilizes the State Mandates process as a source of potential reimbursement for costs to implement the bill. However, State Mandate reimbursement often don't come to fruition or implementation costs are often higher than estimated. The California Superior Court has also found the state's practice of deferring payments unconstitutional. Most importantly, State Mandates have long been used as a means to for the unit mandating an expenditure to deflect their social and fiduciary responsibility onto another entity. California must not abandon its responsibility to equitably serve California's 2.2 million community college students.

We are further concerned that AB 302 does not include a provision to report back to the Legislature about the implementation and status of this measure nor does it make any attempts to request for resources to cover the extensive costs and liabilities in the measure. **Given the magnitude of the tasks required by AB 302, provisions such as a pilot, sunset, and report to the Legislature should be seriously considered.**

Our colleges strive to be good neighbors. We also want to emphasize that many cities, counties, and non-profit organizations are already doing safe parking programs, as a result establishing a permissive legislation is key. Referrals to counties and social services providers are far more appropriate given their scope, expertise, and designated funding. For our colleges, the resources expended to provide ongoing security monitoring and sanitation facilities are resources that could be utilized to support student financial aid, housing partnerships, emergency grants to students, or student success programs that enable individuals to enter the workforce to make a living wage.

Finally, AB 302 (Berman) does not fix the real housing and affordability challenges our students face. Cabrillo Community College District strongly supports any measure that increases financial support for these students either through the state's system of financial aid, grants for community-based organizations to connect our homeless students to housing services, or increasing access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. **We respectfully urge our state leaders to focus on long-term solutions that address the true challenges students face, not temporary fixes. More importantly, we urge you to eliminate bias from higher education and explore options the equitably support community college students' success.**

For the above reasons, we respectfully ask Assemblymember Berman to amend AB 302 to become permissive in scope and include a funding appropriation for colleges that implement this measure. If you have any questions regarding AB 302 or our proposed amendments, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [mawetste@cabrillo.edu](mailto:mawetste@cabrillo.edu).

Sincerely,

Matthew E. Wetstein, Ph.D.  
Superintendent/President

Cc: Community College League of California